

Female Corporeality and the Sublimation of Pain: A Study of *The Pakistani Bride* by Bapsi Sidhwa

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Abstract

This study explores in detail the crisis of female corporeality and how the self sublimates the resultant pain into psychological empowerment. Pakistani women have long been viewed as having no space for themselves. They could not master their choices or muster up courage to fight for the fulfillment of their desires. Similarly, the female characters in Bapsi Sidhwa's novel *The Pakistani Bride* (1990) appear to be oppressed and marginalized entities, dependent on men for their socio-economic needs. Yet, this research argues that their corporeal pain transforms into a psycho-emotional haven providing them a space of their own to think and make their own decisions. This specific strand has been a neglected area of research in the Sub-continental context. The research design used in this study is qualitative while the textual analysis is used as a method to analyze the data. The research pursues feminist literary standpoint theory posited by bell hooks (2004) in the postcolonial feminist context, while the Foucauldian (1979) concept of "Panopticism" (p. 195) and "Docile Body" (p. 135) are threaded to highlight the concept of complete physical and mental surveillance of the autonomous body/person in order to investigate the shift of gender/power roles from male hegemony to female empowerment.

Keywords: *Corporeality, Sublimation, Suppression, Marginalization, Empowerment.*

The Pakistani Bride (1990; henceforth *The Bride*) by Bapsi Sidhwa exposes the socio-cultural ideologies used as powerful instruments to establish masculine hegemony and control over the female bodies. The (female) body

becomes the target on which (masculine) atrocities are prescribed which augment the positioning of genders, the power structures, place of women, their objectification, and their marginality in the society. These are some of the main concerns of this research which attempt to focus on the gendered and corporeal existence of Pakistani women. Considering the body as a surface open to pain and violence, *Bride* highlights how the female bodies convert this corporeal pain into psycho-emotional empowerment.

The concept of body emerged in the Western theoretical framework as a model to analyze and study the socially subjugated individuals, particularly women, their perceptions, experiences and their relation to power (Foucault, 1979; Frank, 1990; Bordo, 1993; Butler, 1993; Grosz, 1994; Gatens, 1996; Davis, 1997; Fraser & Greco, 2004; Turner, 2008). The study of the body evolved in the field of biology or medical sciences throughout the 19th and the early 20th century. Nevertheless, these early forms of discourses on the body largely remained limited to the anatomical or biological spheres that did not play an active role in the creation of socially situated subjectivities (Turner, 2008). However, the main contribution attributed to the body-studies came from the feminist researches on the body (Butler, 1993; Bordo, 1993; Grosz, 1994; Frank, 2010). These studies also probed into the matter how the body regulates and determines sexual life of both the genders.

From the ancient Greeks to the thinkers of Enlightenment such as Descartes, (1637), Hobbes, (1655), Rousseau, (1754), Kant, (1781) (as cited in Sullivan, 2017, para. 4) body had been constituted “as a natural and biological entity, the fleshly shell of soul, a self, and/or a mind that is superior to it” (Sullivan, et al., 2017, para. 4). The mind was always presented as the up graded, superior and privileged entity, while the body remained as inferior, deprived and subordinated other. Thus, taking the same direction, mind and body relationship referred to man/mind, female/body, and man and woman relationships as socially aligned dichotomies. The presence of the one, mind was the absence of the other, body/corporeality. Hence, the first appeared having a predominant position while the other as suppressed and marginalized. On the other hand, male, masculine Western reasoning and philosophical agenda of knowledge production (Grosz, 1993, p. 187) could not understand that it was the body (particularly the female body) that underwent several experiences of sufferings and became a contested field of male, masculine desire. As a conclusion, it was the (female) corporeality/the (female) body which passed through traumatic agonies, brutally imposed by the male patriarchal norms.

There are different senses in which corporeality is viewed in this research in relation to different female characters. As all the female characters

in *The Pakistani Bride* (1990) stand at different continuum of pain and resultant sublimation, so corporeality/body can be defined under various epithets. It is not only a concept simply related to physical or bodily pain but also linked with emotional and psychological torment. Even verbal abuse, malicious male gaze and psychological torture all come under the wider canopy of corporeality/corporeal pain (as a human's first and foremost interaction with the outer world is through physical body). Corporeality can further be classified according to different forms of pain (physical, emotional, psychological) which the female characters in Sidhwa's *Bride* (1990) pass through. These can be termed as: Abused and walloped corporeality (in case of Hamida who is whipped variously by her husband and her own son in the course of the novel many a times); Sexually assaulted and tortured body/corporeality (in relation to Zaitoon, who has to pass through not only the physical ordeals and mental torture but also encounter sexual assault twice, once by her own husband and second time by the two strangers during her absconding peregrination); Emotionally deprived body (Afshan, whose emotional and bodily desires as a young bride remain unfulfilled until many years after her marriage); Psychologically tormented corporeality (in case of Carol whose inner most self has been corroded by the constant jealousy, suspicion and abuse of her husband Farukh); Agonizing corporeal inability to procreate (Mariam's physical barrenness and her infertility which she endures silently and without any complaint to God until the moment, when Zaitoon's fate is decided with a Kohistani by her father and Mariam outbursts with pain her motherly feelings for her).

Bapsi Sidhwa (1938-) is a prolific Pakistani diasporic writer who belongs to Parsee/Zoroastrian community. Growing up as a polio patient she got her early education at home until the age of fifteen. She has written four novels in English, *The Crow Eaters* (1978), *The Pakistani Bride* (1983) [later called *The Bride* (1990)], *Cracking India* (1988) first named *Ice candy man*, and *An American Brat* (1993). All these novels reflect her perceptions of life and her complex experiences of being a Parsee, Punjabi, Pakistani-American woman. Apart from this fictional oeuvre, Sidhwa has also published an adaptation, *Water: A Novel* (2006) based on Deepa Mehta's film of the same name. Her other works include *City of Sin and Splendour: Writings on Lahore* (2006), a compilation of essays and short stories. In her writings Sidhwa has focused extensively on Indo-Pak culture in both, the colonial and the postcolonial era, women's subjugation, crisis of Diaspora, problems of marriage and her own expatriate experience of displacement in a foreign culture (Sharma, 2013, p. 185).

Bride is the story of undaunted courage of a girl Zaitoon, who was married to a Kohistani tribal as a result of her (adoptive) father's promise to his

'clan's man' (Sidhwa, 1990, p. 13, 23, 118). She had to succumb to the wishes of her father to safeguard his honor together with her own romantic desires to live a fairy tale life in Kohistan. No sooner she becomes the wife of a Kohistani 'tribal' (p. 9, 20, 91); she confronts the bitter reality behind such a life. She was bullied, abused, beaten and treated by her husband (along with the other women in the clan) like a nonhuman creature whose function was merely to facilitate his wishes and desires. Initially she tolerated the male inflicted pain and torture (primarily of her husband) on her body and internalized those physical and emotional scars which later empowered her psychologically to resist and rebel.

Pakistani fiction can be viewed as a part and as a continuation of postcolonial fiction. The portrayal of women by Pakistani fiction writers has variously been viewed in the context of postcolonial feminism. These writers have focused on women's suffering, while only few writers have focused on the issue of women's corporeality and their suffering precisely through bodily / physically inflicted pain. Western feminist postcolonial theorists such as Michel Foucault (1979), Julia Kristeva (1989), Elizabeth Grosz (1995), bell Hooks (2004) and Donna Haraway (2004) among others have brought to light the issues of female body, sexuality, femininity, language and power, male hegemony, and gender power roles under the feminist literary criticism.

The existing block of literature on *Bride* (1990) produced by Cynthia Abrioux (1990), Fawzia Afzal Khan (1991), Niaz Zaman (1995) and Madeleine Bengtsson (2008) among others only focuses on the suffering of Pakistani women. Their reviews mainly focus on the topic of female suppression and to a certain extent on women's rebellion against the patriarchal society. Yet none of them fully discuss women's sublimation of physical pain inflicted on them by men (through beating, rape, acid attacks and physical abuse). However, because of the general relevance in terms of feminist issues raised, "Images of Purdah" by Niaz Zaman (1995), "Women in History" by Fawzia Afzal Khan (1991), and "A Study of the Stepfather and the Stranger" by Cynthia Abrioux (1990) have been phenomenal to contextualize this study. These authors mainly emphasize women's objectification and their efforts of resistance. In the article "The Aesthetics of Violence and Diverse Sexualities in the Fiction of Bapsi Sidhwa and Monica Ali" (2015) Sivangi Rudra's focuses on Pakistani women as culturally and sexually objectified victims who suffer physically and socially due to male brutalities including physical abuse, rape, domestic and psychological violence. However, the main concern in her research is also to explore the possible relationships between women's mental illness and the violence they endure, due to their subjugation within the patriarchal Pakistani society.

Another relevant research study, *Status of Women in Pakistani English Fiction: A Study of Pakistani Postcolonial Fiction* (2012) by Zia Ahmed is an exploration of the different roles played by Pakistani women in the socio-cultural set up of the Pakistani society. The author has pinpointed the suppressed and marginalized position of Pakistani women as indicated by the Pakistani writers, Ahmed Ali (1940), Zulfiqar Ghosh (1967), Bapsi Sidhwa (1990), and Nadeem Aslam (2004). Zia Ahmed offers a panoramic view of the lives of Pakistani women by presenting their different social backgrounds: the rich as well as the poor women, the educated and the uneducated, the old and the young who prove to be the sustenance and the source of strength for each other. The author attempts to explore the psychological problems faced by the Pakistani women as a result of constant suppression, physical violence and sexual abuse but he stops short at depicting the changes that have occurred in the women's social attitude and in their anti-patriarchal roles.

None of these researches have investigated the gradual development of the emancipation of Pakistani women through corporeal transformation. Their focus is either on women suppression or on the psycho-emotional maturation of the female characters. Although these research studies voice the concerns of Pakistani women yet neither of them presents how does the physically inflicted pain on female's body sublimates it into psychological empowerment? The already existing literature on the aforementioned novel also does not show the constant development and change in the position of Pakistani women which has occurred and predicted to occur in the future. To the best of the researchers' knowledge, neither there appears to be any in-depth study on the subjugated female fictive bodies/characters that rebel and break the hegemony of patriarchal principles by challenging the stereotypical gender/power roles in the Pakistani society, nor on the chronological evolution of women's rebellion – negotiation – emancipation and gender role alterations which lead them to the 21st century ongoing process of liberation. The current research aims to do the same by pointing out gender subversion and decolonizing the myth of Pakistani women's frailty. Importantly, the existing reviews/researches focus less on the trope of men's role in the process of Pakistani women's emancipation. A detailed analytical study of the aforementioned novel denotes that men are also attaining maturation and undergoing a process of gradual change in their views and attitudes towards women. One example is the role of the Pakistani Soldier at the end of *Bride* who saves the life of the oppressed heroine Zaitoon and provides her shelter hence, adopting the role of a savior.

The present qualitative research pursues different theoretical concepts such as the feminist literary standpoint theory by bell hooks (2004) in the postcolonial feminist context and the concept of "Panopticism" (p. 195) and

“Docile Body” (p. 135) by Michel Foucault. Standpoint theory is based on three major tropes – perspective, position and location – which enable one to see the relationship between knowledge and power in order to determine the position of the oppressed in the hegemonic orders. The politics of location leads the marginalized to participate in the formation of counter hegemonic cultural practices in order to form an identity and to create a space to begin the process of re-vision (hooks, 2004, p. 153). In this context, women in general appear to be an oppressed and marginalized group, a victim of masculine hegemonic cultural practices in Pakistan. According to bell hooks (2004) through the oppositional political struggle one ‘transgresses’ (p. 153) one’s moves into another location, out of one’s place, which gives pleasure to the oppressed. This choice according to hooks is crucial as it determines our capacity to react and envision the new and alternative choices to lead the defiant political gesture (p. 153) and perhaps to gain power through relocation of identity. Standpoint theory focuses on the sufferings of the marginalities but the very experience of being located at margins is neither a complete deprivation nor a fulfillment. It gives knowledge, chance to improvise and conceptualize alternatives. The oppressed can look both from inside out and outside in an attempt to focus their attention on the margin as well as on the center which provides them oppositional world view. Thus marginality is a point of sublimation from where the subjugated and oppressed move ahead in their struggle to resist. The possibility to say no to the oppressor is also located at the margins. The voice of resistance becomes a counter language to maintain this counter resistance.

Foucauldian (1979) concepts of “Panopticism” (p. 195) and “Docile Body” (p. 135) are additional conceptual threads embodied in this research which highlight the concept of complete physical and mental surveillance of the autonomous body/person. A docilized body (p.135) is a subjugated, modified, disciplined, shaped and remolded body according to Foucault, which is trained by a superior power to obey all his/her orders without any question or resistance. Such an all-encompassing power sets a Panoptic tower (A type of institutional building constructed for the purpose of observing all the (pan-) inmates by the [Opticon] a single watchman) in which inmates are unable to tell whether or not they are being watched. Although it is impossible for the single watchman to observe all the cells at once, the fact that the inmates cannot know when they are being watched means that all inmates must act as though they are being watched at all times (p. 195). This concept of Jeremy Bentham (1798) later employed by Foucault, demonstrates the subjugated and marginalized position of Pakistani Women in the past. The complete surveillance of women demanded by the patriarchal Pakistani society and the male inflicted physical pain on their bodies which they internalized, sublimated their corporeal pain into psycho-emotional empowerment with which they rebelled against the stereotypical norms of the society.

The research design used in this study is qualitative while the textual analysis is used for the purpose of analyzing the fictional work of a Pakistani fiction writer (in English) Bapsi Sidhwa's *The Pakistani Bride* (1990). For analyzing the text both primary and secondary resources are utilized to bring home the findings of this research. The trajectory under which the textual analysis is done employs different stages such as 'Inference' which means drawing a conclusion on the basis of reasoning and evidences. Next is employing the 'Specific theoretical concepts within the framework of feminist literary criticism' and applying them on the selected contents to extract complete hidden meanings. Another step which has been taken for the textual analysis is 'determining the significance of the text' that how does it reveal the development of the plot, theme and characters, women's sublimation of pain and their empowerment? The final stage is 'utilizing the primary and secondary sources' to bring home the findings of the research.

In *The Pakistani Bride* (1990) the patriarchal Pakistani society operates by means of phallogocentric norms imposed by men upon women. For example, although only ten years old; Qasim's pride on his masculinity is evident when his father places "a heavy muzzle-loaded in his arm (p. 7), which becomes a symbol of manhood for him. He is told that he has to marry a girl who has been won in return of the payment of a loan from Rasham Khan: "Qasim's father had made sure that this one was able-bodied- was worth than the loan due" (p. 7). It is evident that the society imposes and regulates gender roles by assigning men the superior position (as the powerful master who can govern and lead), while women are reduced to humiliating position as being weak and an outcast commodity, totally dependent and under constant threat of being beaten, abused and sexually exploited by men.

The women in the novel are sold like objects or won either in the name of family honor or to settle male-bullies and male scores. Being "a man, conscious of the rigorous code of honor by which his tribe lived" (p. 7), Qasim's sense of honor often provoked him to outrageous actions like fighting, abusing and bullying other men in the clan especially in case the discussion turned to their womenfolk. At the age of fourteen he saw his wife Afshan washing herself at the stream. He wished to grab her and exerted physical force to vanquish her but when a stranger tried to intervene in the rumps between the two, "Qasim, red with fury, cried, 'But she is my wife. Let's go, she is my wife'" (p. 11). This code of honor on the one hand, objectified women while on the other, projected men as heroes who were justified to safeguard these weak creatures (women) through sexual force.

Afshan got married to Qasim when she was fifteen years old with all her aching desires of physical consummation, while her husband was only ten years old. She remembered her feelings as a bride, “her body trembled with anticipation” (p. 8). She had shut her eyes and when she opened them “she stared in amazement at the childish, frightened face and the slanting, cringing eyes watching her as if she were to smack him”(p 9). All her physical desires which Afshan the bride had huddled in her long bridal veil left her in total dismay, unaware of either to cry or to laugh, “she began to laugh, while tears of disappointment slid down her cheeks” (p. 10). Years after her marriage she still remembered, how her body was full of longings and how often sitting by the stream she used to dream of her future husband’s impatient caresses: “My body was young and full of longing. I’d squeeze my breast to ease their ache...” (p. 10). Nevertheless, instead of the fulfillment of these longings and desires what she found was an angrily sobbing school boy of age ten who was her husband now and whom Afshan lifted on the bed “brushing his tear-streaked cheeks with her full red mouth, she had tucked his legs between her thighs and fallen asleep” (p. 10).

Nevertheless, Afshan continued her life with Qasim (five years younger to her), but not as a suppressed wife (totally dependent on the ways her husband would dictate her to live), but as a resilient and powerful young woman. After a series of harsh battles with herself and with the social norms, she managed to sublimate her emotional pain of unconsummated marriage (for the first four years of their marriage) into psychological empowerment: “Afshan accepted her lot cheerfully...He teased her and played pranks. When he was particularly unkind and obdurate, his wife and his mother combined to give him a thrashing”(p. 10). She attained this courage and solidarity by means of her forbearance and fortitude: “Afshan smacked his arm off... And she slapped him hard. Qasim cowered, shielding his face, while Afshan berated him...you shameless dog, you jackal, you! I’ll teach you to be brazen” (p. 11). The resilience, with which Afshan lived and maintained a balanced relation with her husband in the future years (although living under the strict patriarchal system), denote her autonomy. Here Afshan appears to celebrate a counter hegemonic culture practice which according to hooks (2004) forms an identity and creates a space to begin the process of re-vision. As much as one finds herself/himself existing on the margins, through the oppositional political struggle one ‘transgresses’ ones moves into another position and this choice determines one’s capacity to react and envision the new and alternative choices to lead the defiant political gesture (p. 153). Afshan’s defiant gestures in her marital relation (mentioned above) lead her to pass a balanced conjugal life in the future years. The way Afshan’s young body, overwhelming with anticipations and desires was crushed by the patriarchal standards of the cruel society; proved to be a turning point in her life. She sublimated and converted

her physical bereavement and psycho-emotional loneliness into something higher, productive and powerful which determined her future relationship on equal footing with her husband.

Zaitoon (initially called Muni), the adopted child (by Qasim) during partition, was protected, loved, cared and reared by Qasim. Although he loved her yet he forced her into a traumatizing, abusive marriage to his native Kohistani, a brutish patriarch, as a result of his pledge to his kinsman. On the other hand, Zaitoon appeared to be very humble and obedient to her father apart from being very intelligent and brave. Even during the terrible times of partition and bloody riots when she was only five years old with missing parents, she didn't lose her senses. With fortitude and bravery she accepted whatever was destined to come her way. After the massacre in the darkness of the night, when Zaitoon clung to the legs of Qasim, considering him her own father, she immediately sprung up by her instinct of recognition "you aren't my Abba', she said in accusing surprise' " (Sidhwa, 1983, p. 30). When Qasim inquired about the name of her father, she replied "My father's name was Sikander'. Her use of the past tense startled him. It showed a courage and forbearance that met the exacting standard of his own proud tribe"(Sidhwa, p. 30). Thus Qasim, overwhelmed by fatherly love embraced the girl whom he thought to kill moments ago.

Zaitoon's intelligence and her compassion to lessen the pain of others became evident when Qasim, in search of her parents, carried her drenched in perspiration: "The girl had not said a word. Sensing his strain, she shifted her weight to ease him"(Sidhwa, 1983, p. 31). Her unflinching hope to find her parents continued till the end when she peered eagerly to all the faces she came across. However, they all turned out to be strangers. The courage, hope and certitude with which Zaitoon accepted her new father and served him the best a daughter could, remained with her even in the moment of crisis when her fate was decided for the second time; this time by her own (adoptive) father. She accepted Qasim's decision out of love and respect to him.

Here once again women could be seen under the constraints of the Pakistani society. The society symbolized by Qasim and his tribe's men tried to wield its influence on the undaunting courage and militancy of Zaitoon. Qasim had given his pledge to his clan's man Misri Khan to marry his daughter to his son who lived in Kohistan. Zaitoon, brought up in the vivacious and lively modern ways of life in the city of Lahore could not adjust in the hard and rough life style of the mountaineers. Although she was fascinated by the glorified description of Kohistani landscape related to her by Qasim yet she wept and entreated her father (Qasim) not to marry her in a foreign land. All her sulking and whimpering proved in vain and for the sake of her father's love she became

a victim in the name of honor. All this proved to be the beginning of her endurance which later strengthened her.

Mariam (Nikka's wife) though being a female exercised her militancy to dissuade Qasim from marrying Zaitoon into the tribal clan. In those moments of agitation and grief when discussing with Qasim the issue of Zaitoon's marriage she even forgot to cover her head in front of Qasim who had never seen her before like this. Mariam "appeared agitated and glanced frequently at Qasim. Then turning to him, she addressed him as boldly as she might a woman in the privacy of her own rooms" (Sidhwa, 1983, p. 92). The impact of this autonomy and militancy on Qasim was so great that he could not raise his eyes from the pavement to gaze at her and spoke very little: "Mariam, her agitation mounting, talked faster, gesticulating, and pushing back strands of grey hair that fell forward into her eyes" (p. 92). This was the strength of her personality, the vigor of her character which even did not allow Nikka, her own husband; to stand against her "It was almost six years since Nikka's release from prison. As he listened to his wife expostulate with Qasim, he showed a weariness, a reluctance to impose his will as forcefully as of old" (p. 93).

The social recognition of the (Pakistani) women presented by Bapsi Sidhwa in *The Pakistani Bride* (1983) has still been a concern of the feminist debates. In spite of women's struggle and autonomy which they have exhibited in their individual domains, they are still viewed existing on the border line, the marginal position in the society. Marginality is a state of existence between the two poles neither attaining complete satiety nor complete deprivation. For bell hooks (2004) a "space of radical openness is a margin—a profound edge. Locating oneself there is difficult yet necessary. It is not a "safe" place. One is always at risk. One needs a community of resistance"(p. 156). Women in *The Pakistani Bride* (1983) appeared to be located at the margins while the men acted in the centre, into the helms of the affairs. Keeping in view the binary opposition, women were shown in subjugated positions that existed in the traumatized other spaces where they were neither totally accepted nor rejected by the society. Their presence was essential to perpetuate the masculine hardihood, to inflate men's ego while socially they were nonexistent and unacknowledged. But this marginal positionality encoded a culture of resistance "a sight one stays in, clings to even, because it nourishes one's capacity to resist. It offers to one the possibility of radical perspective from which to see and create, to imagine alternatives, new worlds" (hooks, 2004, p. 157). Thus marginality is the very space, a location which entails transformation. A state of metamorphosis from where one steps forward, a state of becoming, from sublimation of the physically abused body into a state of nurtured self that resists, rebels and elevates the socio-emotionally deprived individuals. It strengthens and nurtures the bereft; the oppressed colonized

(female) bodies into something higher and psycho-emotionally sublime. Almost all the women in Sidhwa's *The Pakistani Bride* (1990) are deprived of the essential psycho-emotional and socio-corporeal needs. Be it the case of Afshan, Zaitoon, Mariam, Hamida or Carol (the white woman). The mode of existence these women were forced to live made them conscious of the existence of the whole universe other than their own. A space, that reminded them "... a main body made up of both margin and center" (hooks, 2004, p. 156).

Zaitoon's forbearance, her resistance and rebellion to accept the Kohistani norms which rendered women not more than an object of men's sexual gratification, signified a culture of resistance encoded in this marginal suppression. It "... provided us with an oppositional world-view—a mode of seeing unknown to most of our oppressors, that sustained us, added us in our struggle to transcend poverty and despair, strengthened our sense of self and solidarity" (hooks, 2004, p. 156). Zaitoon learnt, educated and elevated herself through her own traumatized experience of torture and pain both physical and emotional. Her decision to escape, and break away the fetters of a tabooed past was an open challenge to the masculine principle of repression. She became a living voice whose resonance could be heard in the upcoming years in the characters of Chanda in *Maps for Lost Lovers* (2004) by Nadeem Aslam and Ayesha in *Karachi You Are Killing Me* (2014) by Saba Imtiaz.

After Zaitoon's marriage with Sakhi (the Kohistani tribal), the time she spent living there in Kohistan became the real battlefield, the truly productive, transformative phase of Zaitoon's life. She learnt to face the odd circumstances, to endure and rebel at the wisely chosen moment in time against the dehumanizing patriarchal norms of the Kohistani society. In this respect, Zaitoon's whole life could be marked into two substantial phases; from suppression to resistance and sublimation to an empowering self-awareness.

The remembrance of the good old days always provided relief and strengthened Zaitoon in her perilous trapeze to escape the bestiality of Sakhi and the tribal life. It had a double effect. On the one hand, thoughts of the past, the love and caresses of Mariam and Qasim had embalming effect on Zaitoon's wounded self: "The girl gradually soothed herself with the confronting cadences. In a whisper, prayer and appeal poured from her mouth, and images advanced—of Miriam, of Nikka sitting on the sagging string-bed before his shop, and of Qasim" (Sidhwa, 1990, p. 193). These memories of the past gave her inner strength and hope to continue her agonizing journey alone in the barren mountains. On the other hand, the very instinct to escape, to save her life and to get freedom from the suffocating environment made her learn the tactics to survive and keep an eye on the enemy in a struggle to liberate herself. As bell hooks (2004), propounded; "... there is an effort to remembrance that is

expressive of the need to create spaces where one is able to redeem and reclaim the past, leagues of pain, suffering, and triumph in ways that transform present reality” (p. 211).

The present research also highlights how sometimes the excessive social pressure and suppression trigger rebellion and work in the making of an individual totally opposite to what the society demands. In the case of Zaitoon, the society tried to engulf her freedom and demanded complete subjugation while the presence of an immense social order in the form of masculine principle worked alternatively in the development of Zaitoon’s character. Her learning began with self-awareness to rebellion and finally culminated into self-empowerment; though attained at the cost of physical suffering and mental distress. As Julia Kristeva (1989) highlighted in *Women Times*; “When a subject is too brutally excluded from this sociosymbolic stratum... she may, by counter investing the violence she has endured, make of herself a possessed agent of this violence in order to combat what was experienced as frustration” (p. 209-10). In *The Pakistani Bride* (1990) the exclusion of Zaitoon from the sociosymbolic order is counter invested with the power wielded by a white woman Carol (as a rescuing and guardian force) who saves Zaitoon in her struggle to safeguard her identity.

If one gives up the social contract the result is anarchy, social ostracism or death but Zaitoon had been forcefully excluded from this sociosymbolic contract by the patriarchs of the society. The inner anguish, pent up emotion and her agitation to the level of killing herself, all were at the verge of explosion but she kept her morale up. Instead, she endured and sublimated this anguished pain living within the bonds of the social contract and sublimated the psycho-corporeal pain into violent energy which saved her through all the ordeals during her escape. Her decision to run away and liberate herself from the brutality of Sakhi and the tabooed social standards was a revolt which she waged against the patriarchal customs of Kohistani society. Zaitoon fulfilled the sacrificial contract while it sublimated her inner self and strengthened her in the attempt to safeguard her femininity, identity, and the wounded self esteem. She epitomized all those subjectivities; those suppressed feminine identities that had been circumscribed by the society. According to Julia Kristeva (1989), women “are forced to experience this sacrificial contract against their will. Based on this, they are attempting a revolt which they see as a resurrection but which the society as a whole understands as murder” (p. 207).

Carol, an American white woman, was married to a Pakistani named Farukh, another representative of masculine tyranny. She also desired recognition of an irreducible feminine identity. Her subjective experience,

though white in color and from a privileged dominant race, were not less traumatic in comparison to any Pakistani female character in the novel. Her loneliness, desire for the company of an individual and her craving for love, are the evidences to prove her psycho-emotional bereavement and lack of compatibility with her husband. This was the very reason she got infatuated to Major Mushtaq, who paid her attention and gave her respect. The controlling, domineering, over possessive and jealously guarded nature of Farukh (Carol's husband), was another reason which drifted her away from him. After each party they attended there were quarrels between them: "You're lying. You enjoyed it, every bit of it. Most likely you encouraged him. You welcomed him. You devoured him. You opened your arms wide thrusting out your pink tits!" (p. 110). She felt something torn within her with the continuous insults Farukh hailed upon her with his constant jealousy and suspicion. She felt as half of herself had been putrefied because of Farukh's high handedness. The negative impact of Farukh's behavior on her was that "she hated what it had done to her. It had corroded her innocence, stripped her, layer by layer, of civilized American niceties. She was frightened to see a part of herself change into a hideously vulgar person"(p. 111).

Carol's adjustment in a foreign country, her attempt to adapt to a new culture, together with her isolation and incompatibility with her husband, ignited in her a sense of boredom and meaninglessness which met satiety in Mushtaq' flirtation and admiration of her. She found him a safe haven and even implored him to marry her in a desire to get rid of that tedious unattractive life which had rotten her soul. She craved for love and warmth which Major Mushtaq appeared to possess: "She recalled the Major's caresses soothing her and his warm, hard embrace. Yes, she had avenged Farukh's grotesque jealousy—helped its nightmares come true!" (p. 126). Nevertheless, like all other men in the region, Mushtaq did not prove to be the real gentleman who could promise shelter, peace and the love she desired and needed. At first when Carol sobbingly implored him to marry her, "He cried, 'Of course I will marry you, sweetheart, if that's what you want' (p. 179). Next time when he met her, Mushtaq's morbid declaration revealed his true personality. His denial to marry Carol yet his wish to live in the already existing relation with her exposed the actual claims of Mushtaq's unflinching love for Carol which proved merely as physical attraction, and a corporeal existence of the body in demand: "Mushtaq kissed her. You'll realize it's better this way. Come on, smile' (p. 181). Carol's realization of herself into a body that merely delighted men, of her being considered as a sexed entity, conjured upon her the secrets of the power of her own existence. The brutality and cunningness through which Farukh treated Carol and pseudo promises of love through which Mushtaq played with her emotions, ignited a power in Carol that transformed her weakness into a force. She sublimated her psycho-emotional pain into towering courage

through which she replied back to Mushtaq: “Why not...Her furious eyes blazed open. Swinging her hand deliberately, she slapped Mushtaq full in the face. She laughed when anger blotched his skin. ‘All right, now you smile!’ she said quietly” (p. 181). Instead of making herself an insignia of pain, begging for the masculine sympathy to relive and becoming an object in their hands, she resolved to uphold herself with dignity by slapping Mushtaq in his face as an answer to his infidelity.

On the other hand, Carol felt a strong bond with Zaitoon as her own experience of pain inflicted by men was not different than Zaitoon’s. They both shared a filial bond of womanhood, of crushed selves, in a desire to be loved, understood and accepted: “Her life is so different from mine, and yet I feel a *real* bond, an understanding on some deep level” (p. 180).

Hamida, in *The Pakistani Bride* (1990), by Bapsi Sidhwa was another victim of the male dominated society, an epitome of the physical violence. She had accustomed herself to the rough wear and tear of the Kohistani life style where neither physical nor psycho-emotional needs of women met any satiety by their men folk. She became used to physical abuse by her husband, the clan’s cruel customs and her own son. He even did not feel reluctant to give a sound threshing to his mother, whenever she stopped him from any evil doing. For example, at one point in the novel Sakhi indulged himself into sardonic enjoyment by kicking and beating an ox to the verge of groaning with open wound: “Sakhi’s eyes dilated and a venomous satisfaction shuddered through him” (p. 172). When Hamida tried to stop him beating the beast with her flailing arm, he vehemently pushed her aside. Hamida’s second intrusion between the ox and her son enraged Sakhi and he hissed with anger yelling at the old lady and tried to beat her in a fury: “The blow caught her shoulder. She scrambled like a crab down the sloping terrain. Sakhi skidded after her, wielding his staff. She tried to run, but a blow hit her legs and she fell forward” (p. 172). Hamida, who epitomized the masculine tyranny, had learnt to live with patience as no alternative refuge was available to her than to bear. Her physical pain had strengthened her inner voice to the extent that she did not feel afraid of taking the daring stance in favor of Zaitoon in front of his son after her departure. She had an inkling of the girl’s daily going to far off places in search of water and logs, yet she did not resist until the final calamity (of Zaitoon’s clandestine flight) had befallen. She approximated the time of the whole day before reporting to her son about Zaitoon’s disappearance. In that she appeared to be silently an accomplice in Zaitoon’s absconding. Her escape seemed the covert voice of Hamida’s own conscience crying for freedom. Hence, Zaitoon represented the other half of Hamida’ self who wanted an escape from the male dominated cruel society and its pain inflicting rituals of beating the female body.

Therefore, Hamida could be considered Zaitoon's alter ego who craved for freedom and desired to liberate herself. The constant experience of physical pain and trauma sublimated Hamida to the point where even death did not matter to her. She was no more afraid of death as she died many a times before her actual death through the brutal corporeal torture and mental trauma by her own men. Thus, she rebelled against the society and became an accomplice in Zaitoon's departure.

Hamida was not the only case who endured physical violence on her abused body by the patriarchal society of Kohistan. Zaitoon was another victim. Her forbearance, fortitude and her endurance of the physically inflicted pain also enriched her and encouraged her to pass through the heavy ordeals of her life. Sakhi, her husband who claimed to be the savior proved a murderer of his wife. He left no stone unturned to find Zaitoon after her escape. His struggle to find his wife was not an attempt of love but a nasty search to punish her, to hang or murder her in the name of honor. The punishment for a woman's escape for her freedom was not less than a murder by the society. The whole novel is replete with examples of Sakhi's brutal violence and punishments inscribed on Zaitoon's body to avenge his bruised ego which Zaitoon deflated: "Zaitoon was distressed and frightened. Yet she felt an odd satisfaction, a timorous sense of triumph, in the clumsy effort to placate her. She had gauged the savage subjugating will of the man she was married to"(p. 169). Whenever she tried to soothe her wounded self through any means to relax herself, she was beaten vehemently over the slightest pretext by her husband. There was an episode in the novel when passing through the terrain, Zaitoon, in an impulse waved her hand to the unseen passerby on the other side of the road. The distance was so broad that the person could hardly see her slender arm. Sakhi chased her, caught her in the act and hit her on her spine and forehead with stones: "He dragged her along the crags. 'You whore,' he hissed. His fury was so intense that she thought he would kill her. He cleared his throat and spat full on her face: 'You dirty, black little bitch, waving at those pigs...'" (p. 185). Sakhi's chasing of Zaitoon and fixing his male gaze in search of her body is reflective of his masculine desire to control and possess the (female) body, in order to inscribe monuments of victory on it.

In Foucauldian (1979) terms, Sakhi sets a "Panoptic Tower" (p. 195) of omnipotent presence for the "Docile Body" (p. 135), at the peak mountain top, standing at the verge of which he could gauge each limb moving in view of its wide range from all sides. Alert on the plateau waiting for Zaitoon (her prey), he acted as a hunter waiting for his prey. The madness with which Sakhi perused Zaitoon was not for his wife but for a prey to be hunted: "I should have killed her by the river!" Sakhi lifted a large rock and heaved it angrily into the

shallows...Later he climbed to some height to search the landscape minutely” (p. 189).

The history is replete with the examples of disciplining and punishing the female body to shape the notions of femininity, sexuality and motherhood. These notions are sustained by the disciplinary mechanism (male agency) in the society and disguised through the discourses of women equality and freedom. Another focus of this research is to debilitate the agencies of power mechanism in the form of patriarchy, society and male principals that inflict pain on the female bodies in a desire to perpetuate their hegemony and control. The case study of all the women in *The Pakistani Bride*, (1983) by Bapsi Sidhwa along with their male counterparts in the novel, is an effort to unveil the traditionally accepted norms of patriarchy, gender, femininity and motherhood in order to realign the bodies that are “sexually specific, concretely “sexed,” (Grosz, 1993, p. 187) and to give them their true identity and meaning.

The patriarchal societies operate themselves by means of power principal, sustainability and control. If power be locomotive, then gender can be fluid, contestable, ambivalent and reversible. The power principles are not necessarily the domain of masculine hegemony. In the postcolonial societies the interconnection of the global and local, of the present and the past probe the axes for the contested gender ideologies which explore the channels for negotiation and reconstruction of the gender.

In view of this, the women in *The Pakistani Bride* (1990) by Bapsi Sidhwa appeared to be no less dynamic and powerful than the masculine principals characterized by sovereignty and potential. Zaitoon’s revolt and fight against the heavy odds (while keeping her spirits high) even at the face of death in the lonely mountains spoke volumes about her inner strength and vitality. Had it been the survival of a man, in the odd circumstances and without any soul to assist, he would have been broken but Zaitoon’s fortitude led her to undergo what she could not have imagined in normal circumstances. It was the test of her mettle which she executed brilliantly. It was not less traumatic and frightening for a young lonely girl to face a leopard, a vulture and watch the brutal murder of a man in front of her in alien mountains of Kohistan: “This was the vilest, the most obscene thing she had ever looked upon. In its drowsy, slovenly state, the bird appeared to be diseased...Hating the bird, she sensed in a flash her own repulsive condition” (p. 207).

Though she suffered yet she attained the freedom from the nasty brutality and tabooed customs of the Kohistani life. She sublimated her psycho-emotional pain into strength and power, bearing the tortures on her exploited body and agonizing soul. In the moments of crisis she assisted herself

from the past memories of the good old times and at times strengthened her courage by her loud verbal assistance to herself in order to keep going. Whenever she found her spirits getting down mostly at the verge of death, she urged herself and called her inner faculties to assist her in order to survive: "Oh stop moaning' she told her stumbling legs in exasperation. 'Come on. Move.' And when she came upon a small streamlet she scolded her stomach: 'Don't growl. Every time you feel thirsty, Allah provides!'" (p. 209). This is how marginality fulfills its function in hooks' (2004) words (as referred above; "there is an effort to remembrance...that transform present reality" p, 112) by providing an insight, a double view from the memories of the past and constantly focusing on the present by those who experience a marginal position and bear the pangs of their lost worlds.

In the light of the above discussion it is concluded that *The Pakistani Bride* (1990) by Bapsi Sidhwa traces the history of Pakistani women's subjugation and mirrors the stereotypical social norms of the Pakistani society at the time of partition. The female characters of the novel not only represent suppression on Pakistani women and their marginal position in the society but also demonstrate the autonomy and resilience with which these marginalized women constantly resist and rebel the pain inflicted on their bodies by masculine principles. These women first endured the corporeal psycho-emotional pain, sublimated it and gradually transformed the pain into psychological empowerment. All the female characters in the novel, be it Afshan, Zaitoon, Hamida, Mariam or Carol are epitomes of this gradual transformation; particularly Zaitoon, who survived and achieved her aim passing through the constant ordeals and bearing on her body the reminiscence of her miserable escape. Zaitoon became an epitome of power, courage and fortitude till her rescue at the end by Major Mushtaq and Carol, who decided to help her at any cost. Carol told Farukh over the verses of Iqbal recited by him that "You know, the girl who ran away? I think she forced her destiny; exercised her "khudi". I'm sure she'll make it..." (p. 229). It was her inner power which kept her going and led her to sublimate her physical pain into something higher and psycho-emotional strength. Thus she elevated herself from all the existing taboos which rendered women inferior, incapable and weak, merely reducing them to Body. Her silent communication with Major Mushtaq at the end of the novel was an emblem of her inner power and a projection of the reconstruction of gender ideologies. She broke the traditional norms of gender, sex, femininity and manhood; by reinvesting them with new meanings of power, fluidity and gender reversibility. Dissolving the constructs she opened up new vistas to revisit the notions of gender and sex leading to the point where reversibility and negotiation could be possible between the binaries.

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